

Regulation
No. 1110-1-8158

16 January 1998

Engineering and Design
CORPS-WIDE CENTERS OF EXPERTISE PROGRAM

1. Purpose. This regulation defines the policy and process for establishing and maintaining expert designations under the Corps-Wide Centers of Expertise (CX) Program. The program provides an inventory of specialized knowledge and skills within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) that can furnish beneficial assistance to all Corps elements. This regulation also prescribes policy and guidance concerning CX use by USACE major subordinate commands (MSC), districts, laboratories, and field operating activities (FOA). The current listing of approved Centers of Expertise, and their approved roles and responsibilities will be available on the USACE Internet Homepage (homepage) at “<http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/centers>”.
2. Applicability. This regulation applies to all USACE Commands.
3. References.
 - a. ER 5-1-9, *Assignment and Transfer of Project Responsibilities*.
 - b. ER 5-1-10, *Corps-Wide Areas of Work Responsibility*.
 - c. ER 70-1-5, *Corps of Engineers Research and Development Program*.
 - d. ER 1110-1-12, *Quality Management*.
 - e. ER 1110-2-1150, *Engineering and Design for Civil Works Projects*.
 - f. ER 1110-345-100, *Design Policy for Military Construction*.
 - g. ER 1140-1-211, *Support for Others: Reimbursable Work*.
 - h. ER 1140-3-1, *Support to Defense Departments and Agencies*.

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4. Distribution. Approved for public release, distribution is unlimited.

5. Definitions. This regulation establishes a two-tiered CX program: mandatory and voluntary. The mandatory portion is designated "Mandatory Centers of Expertise," and the voluntary portion is named the "Directory of Expertise." These designated offices and individuals are considered the "lead activities" in their own specialized area.

a. Centers of Expertise (CX). CX are designated USACE organizations or individuals who have a demonstrated capability and expertise in a specialized area. They improve capabilities and management, eliminate redundancy, and optimize the use of specialized expertise and resources. They also enhance Corps-wide consistency, facilitate technology transfer, help maintain institutional knowledge in key areas, and improve service to customers.

(1) Mandatory Centers of Expertise (MCX). An MCX is a USACE organization that has been approved by HQUSACE as having a unique or exceptional technical capability in a specialized subject area that is critical to other USACE commands. Specific mandatory services to be rendered by an MCX are identified on the homepage. These services may be reimbursable or centrally funded.

(2) Directory of Expertise (DX). The DX is a database registry that identifies organizations and individuals who are designated by HQUSACE as possessing expertise and/or exceptional technical capability in specialized subject areas that is beneficial to other USACE commands. The services to be rendered by DX organizations and individuals are voluntary, advisory and reimbursable.

b. HQUSACE Proponent (proponent). Each MCX and DX category will have a designated proponent. The proponent will be a HQUSACE employee, assigned by the directorate responsible for the MCX or DX category. The proponent is responsible for oversight, monitoring and overall coordination of the MCX or DX category.

c. USACE Board of Directors (BOD). The BOD is tasked in ER 5-1-10 to resolve disputes and approve work outside an MSC's Area of Responsibility. The BOD will therefore be kept informed of the status and roles and responsibilities of all MCX.

6. Policy. The successful accomplishment of USACE activities requires a thorough working knowledge of many specialties, including planning, engineering, design, construction, and operations, many of which involve emerging or rapidly changing technologies. Maintaining state-of-the-art capabilities in critical technologies is basic to the successful execution of the USACE mission, including readiness. Therefore, a process has been established within this regulation to confer expert status upon designated organizations and individuals in certain critical

technology and mission areas to encourage technology transfer. The CX program is a valuable technical asset, and Corps elements are strongly encouraged to make use of DX organizations, and are required to use the services of MCX as defined on the homepage.

7. Responsibilities.

a. HQUSACE - Program. The Director of Civil Works (DCW) is assigned the overall responsibility for program policy, oversight and review of the CX program. The DCW will assign CX Program Manager responsibilities to a HQUSACE employee, as a peripheral duty. The CX Program Manager is responsible for all pagemaster activities as specified in current Command Internet policy and operating guidelines, including keeping information current, and maintenance of official record copies. Overall technical monitoring of individual MCX or DX categories is assigned to a proponent.

b. Proponent.

(1) Operating and Reporting. The proponent is responsible for establishing operating and reporting procedures for each center or individual category, in cooperation with the CX. These procedures may be in the form of a program management plan, a memorandum of agreement, or an authorizing letter. Approved documents will be posted on the homepage, and will (as a minimum):

- (a) Detail the responsibilities of the MCX or DX category.
- (b) Identify services that are to be provided through central funding, if any (certain MCX only).
- (c) Establish procedures and criteria to streamline acceptance and accomplishment of reimbursable work in accordance with ER 5-1-9 and ER 5-1-10.
- (d) Establish procedures for periodically reporting the program activities of the CX.
- (e) Establish enforceable customer service criteria.
- (f) Detail the management responsibilities of the organization which houses the CX staff.

(2) Internet Updating. The proponent for each MCX or DX category is responsible for maintaining and providing to the CX Program Manager approved information on current centers and their roles and responsibilities, in electronic format, so the homepage can be periodically

updated. Pursuant to this regulation, the homepage is the primary source of current approved detailed information on the CX program.

(3) MCX Approval and Reapproval. The proponent is responsible for presenting the MCX to the Directors of Civil Works and Military Programs (and other director or chief, if appropriate as described in paragraph 7.d below) for initial approval, and on a biennial basis for reapproval (at a minimum). The approval process and Approval Request Report format are in Appendix A.

(4) DX Certification and Recertification. The proponent for a DX category is responsible for identifying and arranging for certification of organizations or individuals for the DX designation. The certification process is outlined in Appendix B. Approval will be made by the HQUSACE division chief responsible for the function; if the responsible office or directorate does not have divisions, then the office chief or directorate director will have approval authority. Recertification of DX designations will be accomplished every three years, at a minimum. Additionally, the proponent will ensure on an annual basis that the expertise is still retained by the DX organization, or that the individual is still employed by the designated Corps organization and actively involved in his or her specialty. The proponent will then prepare a certification memorandum for the record, for signature by the responsible HQUSACE division chief.

c. MSC and District Commands.

(1) Assigned Commands. The MSC, district command, or laboratory to which centers are assigned has the responsibility to establish, maintain and support those centers. Support will include the provision of sufficient training opportunities and funding to enable assigned personnel to maintain state-of-the-art proficiency in their assigned mission area. Specific responsibilities of MCX and DX designees will be as defined below:

(a) Mandatory Centers of Expertise. Maintain state-of-the-art technical expertise in the assigned specialty. Provide technical assistance and specific services to HQUSACE, all other USACE commands, and other organizations per the mission and function statements posted on the homepage. Maintain minimum customer service quality standards established in operating procedures.

(b) Directory of Expertise Designees. Maintain state-of-the-art technical competence and awareness in the assigned specialty. Provide advisory assistance or specific design services in the assigned specialty to HQUSACE, USACE commands and other organizations upon request. Maintain minimum customer service quality standards established in operating procedures.

(2) Using Commands. All MSC and district commands will coordinate with and use the expertise and services of the centers as presented on the homepage to satisfactorily accomplish

their mission. They will use the expertise and advisory service of centers as they would any other consulting service and will monitor and review those services in accordance with the provisions of ER 1110-2-1150 and ER 1110-345-100. Using commands will provide adequate funding for CX services. Each district will maintain familiarity with the MCX categories as listed on the homepage. MCX functions and services that are listed as mandatory on the homepage will be used by all USACE elements. Any USACE command involved with the disciplines or business processes having an MCX must contact the appropriate MCX to determine which services of the MCX are mandated for use. Involvement by the MCX must be initiated as early as possible in the planning and design process. To allow MCXs to manage their workload effectively, all USACE commands involved in a project with an assigned MCX will keep the appropriate MCX advised of all applicable project developments. Service-related problems should immediately be brought to the attention of the proponent.

d. Directors of Civil Works and Military Programs. The Director of Civil Works (DCW) and Director of Military Programs (DMP) will jointly review and approve MCX, as well as their roles and responsibilities (e.g., review, design, or both), mandated services, and exceptions to mandatory use (if any). Proposals to the DCW and DMP for MCX approval will be in a written report, whose format and requirements are provided in Appendix A. If an MCX is located outside of the Civil Works and Military Programs Directorates, the Director of the Directorate or Office Chief responsible for the MCX function will share the MCX review and approval responsibility.

e. USACE Board of Directors. The BOD will be kept informed of the status of approved MCX organizations, as well as their roles and responsibilities (e.g., review, design, or both), mandated services, and blanket exceptions to mandatory use (if any). This allows the BOD to monitor Corps-wide work assignments, consistent with ER 5-1-10.

8. Procedures.

a. Task Initiation. USACE commands may request the services of a CX by letter, memorandum of agreement, or any other authorizing document. This document will outline the required scope of service, funding for reimbursable services, and required scheduling constraints.

b. Administration. Administrative requirements, including transfer of funds, are the same as those usually performed for any reimbursable service.

c. Services. The services provided by a center will be included in, and become a part of, the appropriate project design document, and will be subject to the same review and approval actions as any other design product furnished by a USACE command.

d. Work for Others. Procedures for performing services for other agencies of the Federal Government, state and local governments, and private firms are outlined in ER 70-1-5 for research and development laboratories and ER 1140-1-211 and ER 1140-3-1 for all other USACE commands.

9. Exceptions. The use of MCXs is mandatory. Exceptions to their mandatory use may exist. Specific exceptions, if any, can be found on the homepage. Other exceptions must be fully justified, and submitted to the HQUSACE proponent for approval. DX use is always voluntary.

10. Enforcement of MCX Use. MSCs will monitor the usage of MCX in the design activities of their districts, and are responsible for ensuring their appropriate use in accordance with ER 1110-1-12. Districts will include statements in their project documentation, signed by the Chief of Engineering Division, certifying that MCXs have been appropriately utilized in the planning, design, and execution of the project; will fully document any approved exceptions to MCX use; and will certify that use of DX assets has been appropriately considered.

11. Right of First Refusal. DX organizations maintain a need to execute their own missions; therefore, DX organizations maintain the right of first refusal for work that districts elect to send to them. DXs may refuse additional work only when there is adequate justification; however, they are encouraged to refuse work sparingly. Concerns regarding nonacceptance of work should be referred to the proponent for resolution. MCXs may not refuse work in their assigned specialty without approval of the proponent.

12. Program Maintenance. Once established by HQUSACE, an assigned CX will be maintained by the MSC, district command, or laboratory to which it is assigned. As Corps responsibilities and missions change, the missions and functions of established centers may be altered, established centers abandoned, or new centers established. Changes to mission and function statements must be approved by the DCW and DMP (and other director, if appropriate) for MCX, or HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent) for DX. Approved changes will then be posted to the homepage.

13. Recommendations for Program Improvement. Comments and recommendations concerning this regulation or the CX portion of the homepage are welcome. They may be submitted by memorandum to HQUSACE (CECW-EP), Washington, D.C. 20314-1000.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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2 Appendices
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Expertise (MCX)
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(DX) Certification Process.

ALBERT J. GENETTI, JR.
Major General, USA
Chief of Staff

APPENDIX A

Mandatory Centers of Expertise Approval Process

1. **Purpose.** This appendix outlines the process for approval of Mandatory Centers of Expertise (MCX) by the Director of Civil Works (DCW) and Director of Military Programs (DMP), and other director or office chief, if applicable. Use of this approval process for each MCX ensures that the MCX is in the corporate best interests of the USACE, and that its continuation is critical to support important USACE missions.

2. **Process.**

a. **Timeframes.** Existing MCXs will complete their initial certification process as described herein, within six months of publication of this regulation. Thereafter, an MCX will be recertified every two years, or sooner depending upon circumstances.

b. **Approval Request Report.** A report, in the format established in paragraph 3 below, will be prepared by the proponent. The report will be thorough and complete, to allow for subjective evaluation of the MCX. The report will be prepared in consultation with the proposed MCX organization. Formal report transmittal to the DCW and DMP (and other director or chief, if appropriate) for approval will be made by the responsible HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position), with copy furnished to the HQUSACE Resource Management Directorate.

c. **Coordination.** The proponent will coordinate the Approval Request Report with appropriate elements (e.g., CECW-E, CEMP-E, CERD for engineering disciplines) including CERM-M, to ensure there is no overlap with capabilities or responsibilities of existing elements, including MCX, DX categories, or laboratories.

d. **MCX Approval.** Within 30 calendar days of submission of the Approval Request Report, the DCW and DMP (and other director or chief, if appropriate) will meet to make a decision on approval/disapproval of the MCX, as well as exceptions to mandatory use, and definition of roles and responsibilities. This meeting may also include the responsible HQUSACE division chief, proponent, and representatives from the MCX.

e. **Informing the HQUSACE Board of Directors (BOD).** Within seven days after decision on an MCX, the BOD will be informed in writing. This allows the BOD to monitor Corps-wide work assignments, consistent with ER 5-1-10.

f. Internet Recordkeeping. Current approved detailed listings of MCX, roles and responsibilities, and exceptions will be maintained on the USACE Internet Homepage (homepage). This data will be available in a user-friendly format that can be easily accessed. The MCX proponent is responsible for providing the designated CX Program Manager with approved information in an electronic format for posting on the homepage. All MCX information must be approved by the DCW and DMP (and other director or chief, if appropriate) prior to posting to the homepage. An MCX may provide Internet links to their own organizational homepage to provide additional details on the MCX.

g. Eliminated MCX. MCX disapproved for continuation, or not initially approved, will immediately be considered for certification in the Directory of Expertise (DX). A transition plan will be jointly developed by HQUSACE and the MCX to minimize the impacts of the elimination on the MCX organization.

h. Establishment of New MCX. New MCX may be proposed at any time at the request of the responsible HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position). A proponent will be designated, and will prepare and submit an Approval Request Report utilizing the process described herein.

3. Approval Request Report Format, Content and Evaluative Criteria.

a. Document Need. Identify need, and verify that MCX is the appropriate designation based on the following criteria:

- (1) The function is highly specialized and requires unique or exceptional technical knowledge and experience.
- (2) The function requires expertise that is not consolidated anywhere else in the Corps.
- (3) Performing the function at a single center will optimize responsiveness, cost-effectiveness, and quality within the USACE.
- (4) The function is a critical mission area for the USACE, and significant adverse corporate and individual project impacts could result from its absence of an MCX.
- (5) Only one MCX will be designated for a given function.

b. Organizational Selection Criteria. MCX will be proposed based on the following criteria:

- (1) Recognize how the function is presently being accomplished.
- (2) Evaluate the organizational structure, staffing, and other personnel resources which will optimize performance of the function.
- (3) Evaluate the technical abilities, specialized skills, experience, expertise, and equipment which will optimize performance of the function.
- (4) Recognize which existing Corps organizations closely match the organizational structure and specialized skills which will optimize performance of the function.
- (5) Recognize which existing Corps organizations have performed similar functions in a responsive, cost-effective manner.
- (6) Identify which commands are willing to actively support and maintain the organization, skills, and other resources needed to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner. A directive from the HQUSACE proponent to the assigned command will indicate the responsibility of both the center of expertise and the assigned command.

c. Center Description. Describe the organization and function of the proposed MCX.

d. Basis for Function. Evaluate the basis for the function using the following criteria:

- (1) The function is in alignment with the Chief of Engineers' Vision, and the current output of the Campaign Teams.
- (2) A USACE mission or recurring need is being met by performing the function.
- (3) A USACE directive, regulation, or other key driver requires the function be performed.
- (4) The function is highly specialized or unique.
- (5) The function requires specialized skills and expertise to accomplish.
- (6) The Corps-wide workload for performing the function is significant.
- (7) The regional workload is insufficient to perform the function in several commands.
- (8) The expertise to perform the function is fragmented and scattered throughout the Corps.

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(9) Consolidation optimizes the utilization of USACE talent and resources.

(10) Consolidation optimizes USACE responsiveness, cost-effectiveness, and quality in performing the function.

(11) The function is not readily available from the private sector and/or there is a poor track record in executing contracts for this function.

(12) Changes within the Corps have affected the capability to perform the function at most district commands.

e. Qualifications. Evaluate the skills, resources, and technologies of the proposed MCX using the following criteria:

(1) The center possesses all the unique and specialized skills, technical ability and expertise, experience, equipment, and capacity, required to perform its function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(2) The center possesses sufficient fiscal and FTE resources to perform its function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(3) The center maximizes use of information-age technology to perform its function.

(4) The center optimizes technology transfer throughout the Corps.

(5) The center has formalized Quality Control/Quality Assurance processes in place (e.g., ISO 9000).

f. Performance. Evaluate the performance of the center using the following criteria (as applicable):

(1) A significant number of requests for service are acted on annually by the center.

(2) A significant number of different users/customers have requested assistance from the center since the last evaluation.

(3) A significant dollar amount of reimbursable work is received annually by the center.

(4) Requests for service are completed on schedule.

(5) Complaints and disputes from user/customers are insignificant. All complaints are resolved.

(6) The center measurably improves cost-effectiveness for the function within the Corps.

(7) The center measurably improves the quality of the function within the Corps.

(8) The center measurably improves responsiveness to the customer and the speed of accomplishing the function within the Corps.

g. Alternatives. Evaluate alternatives for performing the function as an MCX using the following criteria:

(1) The function cannot be eliminated without adversely effecting the USACE mission.

(2) The private sector does not have the required technical ability, experience, and resources to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner; nor could this technology be easily transferred to the private sector.

(3) No other government agency has the required technical ability, experience, and resources to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(4) Less than one Corps district command in each division has the required technical ability, experience, resources, and customers to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(5) No Corps laboratory has the required technical ability, experience, resources, capacity, and customers to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(6) No other Corps center of expertise has the required technical capability, experience, resources, and customers to perform the function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

(7) No two centers of expertise with a similar mission could be combined to perform this function in a responsive, cost-effective manner.

h. Roles and Responsibilities. Identify specific roles and responsibilities of the MCX. Identify which services are mandatory, and which are optional. Identify the appropriate area of responsibility for the MCX (consistent with ER 5-1-10).

i. Coordination. Document coordination with other appropriate elements to ensure no overlap of responsibilities will occur.

j. Funding Sources. Identify anticipated funding sources and amounts, including central funding sources.

k. Exceptions to Mandatory Use. Identify specific exceptions to mandatory services, if any are appropriate. Exceptions must be specific, narrowly focused, and fully justified. Evaluate potential impacts of exceptions.

APPENDIX B

Directory of Expertise Certification Process

1. **Purpose.** This appendix outlines the process for establishing and maintaining a Directory of Expertise (DX). The DX is a computerized database of individuals or organizations with certain specialized expertise beneficial to other USACE organizations. The HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position) responsible for the category will approve individuals or organizations designated within the category. This approval process maintains a quality control verification of the database, thereby greatly enhancing its value. The intent of this process is to provide maximum flexibility for the proponent organization to make designations, while minimizing the administrative burden.

2. **Process.**

a. **Timeframes.** Organizations designated as Technical Centers of Expertise (TCX), Support Centers (SC), and Centers of Standardization (COS) at the issuance of this regulation will be considered the initial categories for the DX, and will undergo initial certification according to this process within 120 days of the publishing date, to initially establish the DX. Thereafter, a DX category will be reevaluated every three years or sooner, if appropriate. The proponent will certify annually that the personnel upon whom the DX designation is based are still available to perform the function.

b. **Establishment of New Categories.** New categories for the DX can be created at any time. They must be evaluated by a category proponent based on the criteria established herein, and approved by the responsible HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position).

c. **Elimination of Unneeded Categories.** Categories can also be eliminated if it is determined that they are no longer required, or are not being adequately utilized. Elimination must be approved by the responsible HQUSACE division chief.

d. **Coordination.** Prior to establishing selection criteria, the proponent will coordinate with appropriate HQUSACE elements (e.g., CECW-E, CEMP-E, CERD for engineering disciplines), including CERM-M, to ensure there is no overlap with capabilities or responsibilities of existing elements, including MCX, DX categories, or laboratories.

e. Establishment of Selection Criteria. The proponent will determine appropriate selection criteria, depending on the specific DX category. Suggested guidelines for evaluative criteria are furnished in paragraph 3 below.

f. Solicitation of Candidates. Once criteria are established, proponents will solicit qualified candidates. This can be accomplished through stovepipes, or via broad solicitation (e.g., E-mail). The intent of the selection process is to ensure all potential qualified candidates are given a fair opportunity.

g. Nomination of Candidates. In response to a solicitation, organizations will recommend (through MSCs, where applicable) individuals and/or organizations for DX certification. Nominations must be accompanied by a statement that the organization of the proposed DX designee will make the necessary resources available to support the designation, and make the designee available for use as a corporate resource.

h. Selection Process. Selection of designees will be made using the criteria as discussed in paragraph 2e above. The process for selection of individuals and organizations for DX certification is merit based, and all measures will be taken by the proponent to ensure fairness and equity in the selection process. The approving HQUSACE division chief will certify that the merit selection process was properly accomplished.

i. Approval Memorandum. An approval memorandum will document the selection process for each category. It will be prepared by the proponent, approved by the responsible HQUSACE division chief (or equivalent position), and kept on file in the proponent's office.

j. Internet Recordkeeping. Current approved information on DX categories and designees will be housed on the USACE Internet Homepage (homepage). This data will be available in a user-friendly database that can be easily accessed and queried. The category proponent is responsible for providing the designated CX Program Manager with approved information in an electronic format for posting on the homepage.

k. Limitations on Number of Designees. There is no formal limitation on the number of individuals or organizations to receive a DX certification in any specific category. The number of designees is subject to the discretion of the responsible HQUSACE division chief; however, it should be noted that DX is intended to provide access to a limited number of experts in specialized disciplines that are not widely available. An excessive number of designees, or even qualified candidates, may indicate that the category is unnecessary.

3. **Evaluative Criteria.** The following criteria are suggested for consideration by proponents while performing DX evaluations. Each organization has the opportunity to determine the categories for which they wish to serve as proponents.

a. Selection of Categories.

- Does this category align with the Chief of Engineers' Vision, and the current output of the Campaign Teams?
- Is a key mission area (existing or emerging) or recurring need met by category?
- Does a regulation or directive exist mandating the category?
- Does usage pattern, frequency of use, and current and projected workload confirm need for category?
- Is expertise generally available within Corps?
- Are there a significant number of qualified applicants from throughout the Corps? Is the number excessive?
- Can the category be eliminated with minimal impact?
- Is expertise reliably and readily available in the private sector?
- Is there overlap with another category, MCX, or Lab?
- Does this category enhance cost-effective use of resources?
- If need is especially critical, should this be an MCX?

b. Determination of Organizational versus Individual Entries.

- Is an entire organization necessary to support the function or mission?
- Is the type of work best suited for individual or team execution?
- Is the workload sufficient to support an organization?
- Is the majority of the expertise housed in a very limited number of individuals (versus an entire, diverse staff)?

c. Selection of Candidates. Establish specific criteria for each DX category, considering the items listed below.

- Required types of experience.
- Job classifications.
- Education and specialized training.
- Professional certifications.
- Association with professional organizations.

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- Technical publications.
- Identify which organizations or individuals are most qualified, or have specific advantages (e.g., size, location, organizational structure) allowing them to best perform the function.
- Did employing organization propose employee for registration, and are they willing to support the designee?